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ABSTRACT

The Special Education Early Childhood Program of The George Washington University is a one year, full time, noncategorical, 36-hour masters program. The program strives to synthesize multidisciplinary theory and integrate this knowledge into conceptual patterns that guide educators. It seeks to tie theory to practice in the service of the handicapped child. A field based training program has been designed and consists of a primary staff of five who guide the students through this learning experience. Fifty percent of instructional time is spent in the field. Clinical professors accompany students into the classroom of two demonstration centers. One center services severely and multiply handicapped children ages zero to three; the other serves minimally handicapped children ages three to eight. Students spend seven weeks at each site designing and implementing appropriate learning instructional strategies under professorial guidance. The final internship experience sees students practicing in a range of special education sites from infant stimulation to teacher training. The broad based generic nature of the program offers students a springboard to a variety of teaching and leadership roles. Course work is designed to build insights and clinical proficiency in the following areas: (1) multidisciplinary theory, (2) child development, (3) handicapping conditions, (4) identification assessment, (5) clinical teaching, (6) counseling techniques, and (7) alternative models of service. (Author/BD)

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The George Washington University
School of Education
Department of Special Education
Special Education/Early Childhood

Distinguished Achievement

Award Program Entry

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Summary

The Special Education Early Childhood Program of The George Washington University is a one year - full time, non-categorical, thirty-six hour masters program. Our mandate is expressed in the words "synthesize" and "integrate". We strive to synthesize multi-disciplinary theory and integrate this knowledge into conceptual patterns that guide educators. Education is a practical field. Yet its competent practice demands application of theoretical scholarship. Our charge is to tie theory to practice in the service of the handicapped child.

We have designed a field based training program. A primary staff of five, guide students through a rigorous learning experience. Fifty percent of instructional time is spent in the field. Clinical Professors accompany students into the classroom of two demonstration centers.

One center services children ages 0 to 3, severely and multiply handicapped; the other serves children ages 3 to 8, minimally handicapped. Students spend seven weeks at each site designing and implementing appropriate learning instructional strategies under professorial guidance.

The final internship experience sees students practicing in a range of special education sites from infant stimulation to teacher training. The broad based generic nature of our program offers students a spring board to a variety of teaching and leadership roles.

Course work is designed to build insights and clinical proficiency in the areas of:

1. Multi-disciplinary theory
2. Child development
3. Handicapping conditions
4. Identification assessment
5. Clinical teaching
6. Counseling techniques
7. Alternative models of service

This program receives federal recognition. Our grant has enabled us to build an impressive materials center. We continue to draw students from across the country, continue to win University/Federal support, and continue to produce a highly marketable product.

Comprehensive Explanation

Description and Development of the Program:

This program has its tap roots in an earlier categorical early childhood program begun in 1965. Through the years a philosophy has evolved which through deeply felt, vividly portrayed interactions and experiences has led to a total committment to the concept of a non-categorical training and service model for handicapped children and their teachers. Present program content follows.

Fall Semester

Education 295 - Research Methods and Procedures.....(3)
Special Education 260 - The Assessment Process: Identification and Psycho-educational Assessment of Young Exceptional Children (50% field based).....(3)
Special Education 261 - The Teaching/Learning Process: Methods and Materials for Young Exceptional Children (100% field based).(3)
Special Education 266 - Problems in Language Development in Young Exceptional Children (30% field based).....(3)
Special Education 268 - The Development of Young Exceptional Children With Emphasis on Handicapping Conditions (25% field based)..(3)
Special Education 269 - Psycho-Social Concerns of the Early Childhood Special Educator (100% university based).....(3)

Semester hours 18

Spring Semester

Special Education 262 - Seminar in the Education of Young Exceptional Children (50% field based)..... .....(3)
Special Education 267 - The Role of the Early Childhood Special Educator (100% university based).....(3)
Special Education 292 - Professional Internship in the Education of Young Exceptional Children (100% field based).....(9)
Special Education 306 - Dynamics of Family Intervention: Theory and Practice in Special Education (100% university based)... ...(3)

Semester hours 18
Total Semester hours 36

Objectives: Two umbrella goals express our general purpose (1) the need to prepare teachers who proficiently serve minimally and severely/multiply handicapped pre-school and primary aged children, and (2) the need to provide leadership personnel who function in supervisory and/or consultant roles. i.e. The Early Childhood Strategist. The following specific instructional objectives facilitate attainment of general goals:

1. The ability to delineate and describe the course of human development as it pertains to young exceptional children.

2. The ability to identify, describe and categorize the broad range of handicapping conditions of early childhood.

3. The ability to identify characteristic language problems of children with a variety of handicapping conditions.

4. The ability to identify and describe characteristic educational needs of various handicapping conditions.

5. The ability to delineate and describe a variety of language programs.

6. The ability to delineate, describe and compare the intent and content of formal tests designed to:

   a. provide gross screening information
   b. assess global intellectual potential
   c. assess global social and academic achievement
   d. assess specific achievement areas
   e. assess specific potential areas

7. The ability to contrast, compare, describe and define all inquiries made by the McCarthy Scales.

8. Proficiency in the administration of the McCarthy Scales as demonstrated in two different testing situations.

9. Experience in the administration of the Denver Developmental Screening Test as demonstrated in two different testing situations.

10. The ability to structure informal inquiries and tasks which reflect the intent of the various standardized inquiries.

11. The ability to design and develop an informal diagnostic interview kit.

12. Proficiency in the administration of the Informal Diagnostic Interview (I.D.I.) as demonstrated in three different interview situations.

13. Proficiency in the translation of the I.D.I. data into individualized instructional programs as demonstrated by the writing of three different I.D.I. reports.

14. The ability to delineate, describe, and compare various preschool and primary level instructional models.

15. The ability to delineate and describe the curricula areas of the special education early childhood classroom.

16. The ability to translate psycho-educational assessment data into operational instructional objectives for the children at our demonstration centers.

17. The ability to translate operational instructional objectives into appropriate instructional activities as demonstrated in the designated demonstration centers.

18. The ability to collect or make appropriate teaching materials in the service of instructional activities as demonstrated in the designated demonstration centers.

19. The ability to design and execute individualized instructional activities for the child who is the subject of your case study.

20. The ability to integrate all facets of "your" child's psycho-educational assessment, instructional program, family dynamics, and future educational recommendations as evidenced by a comprehensive case study.

21. The ability to delineate, describe, and relate to special education specific psycho-social constructs germane to successful human interaction and essential to the teaching/learning relationship.

22. The ability to delineate and describe types of operational roles in early childhood special education.

23. The ability to describe various early childhood special education roles in relation to role qualifications and role expectations.

24. The ability to identify and describe specific counseling models.

25. The ability to delineate and describe the diagnostic, therapeutic techniques of the life space interview process.

26. The ability to use appropriate life space interview techniques in the service of meeting individual children's needs.

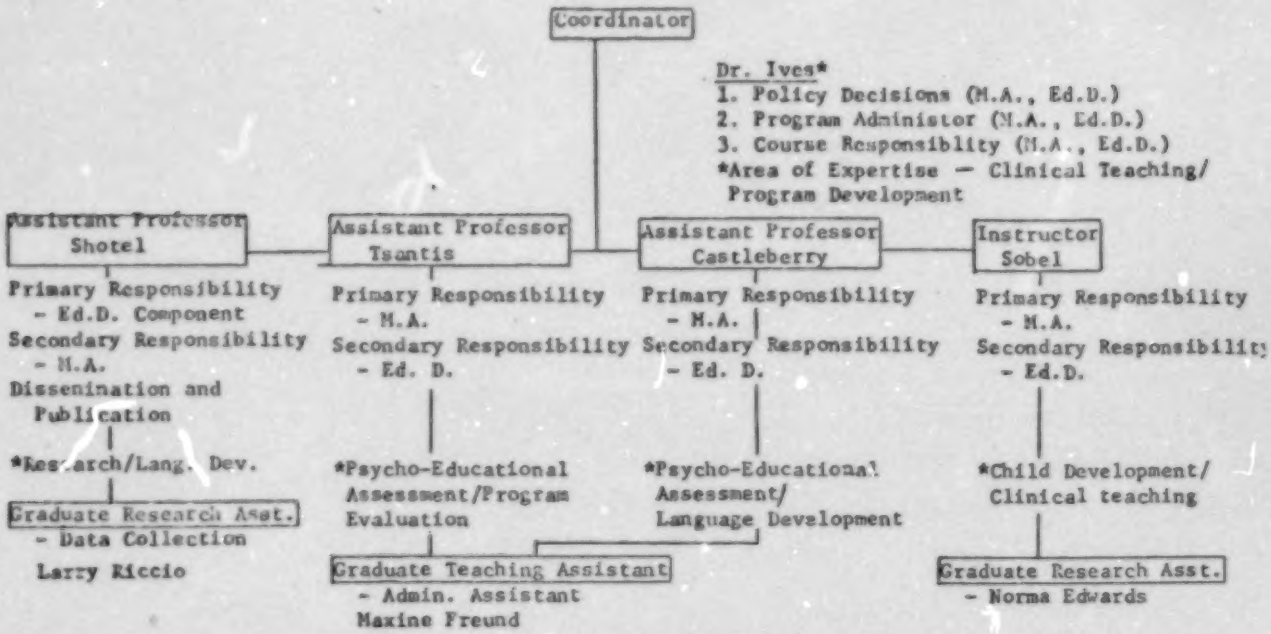
27. The ability to design a Family Education Program for an Early Childhood Special Education site.

28. The ability, demonstrated by internship performance, to integrate and translate total program content into facilitating teacher/child interaction.

29. The ability, demonstrated by internship performance, to interact with fellow professionals in a competent and knowledgeable manner.

Personnel: The following reflects staff responsibilities:

Early Childhood Special Education



Budget

Federal Funds

*1. Direct Student Support
87,375

*2. Instructional Materials
3,485

*3. Program Staff
20,000

4. Secretarial Assistance/ Office Supplies
1,000

5. Publicity/Promotion
300

6. Travel
2,000

G.W. Funding

7. Primary Staff
76,288

University Support
28,768

Total Federal
140,000

Total G.W.U.
105,056

Total $ 245,056

The budget of the Special Education/Early Childhood Program has as its primary focus the direct support[1] of students. Currently twenty-four students receive tuition and fees. An increase in direct student support to thirty students is projected for the coming academic year. Additional budget items reflect the field-based design of the program: Instructional materials;[2] Program Staff[3] (graduate teaching and research assistants aid in program administration, research activities, arrange field visits and staff Media Center); secretarial assistance/office supplies;[4] publicity/promotion;[5] travel[6] (includes staff participation in national conferences); and salary for primary staff.[7]

The student is the focus of this budget. This central concern is supported by university funds as well as funds from the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped, (HEW).

(* denotes budget item expenditures in direct service to students.)

Contribution to the Improvement of Teacher Education:

Our program serves as a model for developing programs of its type. We have disseminated materials and conferred with representatives as near as Hagerstown, Maryland (Hood College) and as far as Brazil (Minister of Education Office). This "out reach" component has touched teacher education programs across the nation through national presentations and consultant activities of staff. Our graduates hold leadership positions in both university special education programs and public school staff development programs. This has enabled us to contribute to teacher education on both pre-service and in-service levels. Our research efforts are contributing to methodological improvements. We have developed a criterion referenced acheivement test, a criterion referenced teaching performance scale, and a tight screening process. Research efforts provided hard data indicating the efficacy of the non-categorical approach to the training of early childhood special educators.

Most importantly to the total field of teacher education, we have developed a model for the integration of field practice and multi-disciplinary field theory that has much to offer our collegues.

Evaluation Methods and Results:

This program is concerned and engaged in preliminary (screening), process, and product evaluation. In addition to traditional screening measures we utilize two program developed instruments; a paper and pencil measure of sensitivity to the psychodynamic data in the classroom and a formalized intake rating scale based upon the information gathered in two personal interviews with staff members. This information is then correlated with program performance and later field experiences. A more detailed description of the process and product variables follow.

In 1973-74 our graduate students (N=38) were exposed to a variety of standardized and experimental instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher training program in both cognitive and affective areas. A comparison group (N=31) of students in two other graduate training programs were also exposed to all applicable instruments to get comparitive data. Significant differences ranging from $p<.001$ (cognitive) to $p<.01$ (affective) were found favoring experimental over control groups on post-testing. Experimental group post-test scores were correlated with Educational Testing Service (ETS) National Teacher Specialty Area Examinations in "Early Childhood Education" (EC) and "Education of Mentally Retarded" (EMR). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Coefficient was found to be significant at the .001 level as the correlation of the EC exam and a criterion referenced achievement test was .66 and .71 for the EMR exam and the criterion referenced test. ETS found candidates with 5 or more years of college preparation in the area of mental retardation have a mean score on that specialty exam of 635. Although these candidates were considered to be "best prepared professionally" in the area of mental retardation their mean score was 19 points below the mean of the experimental sample. This data substantiates our belief that categorical expertise can be brought to students within a non-categorical training program.

1974-75 graduate students were tested on a similar battery of instruments and again showed significant gains in both cognitive and affective areas. In addition a "Teacher Competencies Based Evaluation Scale" was piloted to measure by direct observation our product's performance in the field. Due to our stringent criteria for successful teaching a score of 430 out of 540 is demanded for what we consider to be an index of acceptable professional performances. Results utilizing this instrument have been quite promising. Twenty of thirty graduates observed were considered by the staff to be functioning at the index of acceptable performance while 13 of those twenty students were judged to exhibit "superior" classroom performance.

The variables involved in the total complex of professional performance are certainly "reflective of" but greater than academic achievement alone. Student written evaluations of program content, course by course, contribute summative data regarding the validity and attainment of program objectives. These evaluations are utlized yearly in redesigning course offerings.

Our total research effort has led to the development of sensitive instruments of measurement - methodological techniques much needed in our field. Feedback from this evaluation has already initiated program refinement, and this in turn increased the probability of the highest quality professional entering the job market.

For the past six years we have been gathering relevant research data which we feel brings us a clarity of purpose in both the selection of future teachers and in the design of best possible mechanism for their preparation. The Special Education Early Childhood Program is challenged to continue it's present leadership role and strives for no less than excellence.